



Daniela Moody

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Recently Los Alamos National Laboratory was named one of the top places to work for women engineers by Woman Engineer magazine

We caught up with Daniela Moody who uses her education and training to solve the world's most difficult problems

Daniela is a postdoctoral fellow with the Intelligence and Space Research (ISR) Division, Space and Remote Sensing Sciences, that develops and applies remote sensing instrumentation, analysis, modeling, and machine learning to problems of national security and related sciences.

The Lab: Daniela, how long have you worked here?

Daniela: I arrived in October 2006 as a graduate student and have been working in the Intelligence and Space Research (ISR) Division ever since. My first project was running high-voltage experiments. My research focus then shifted to advanced signal processing methods that ultimately became the topic of my PhD thesis, which I successfully defended at the end of May 2012. I am currently a postdoc in Space and Remote Sensing working on adaptive sparse signal processing algorithms for satellite data processing.

The Lab: What do you enjoy most about your job as an engineer?

Daniela: One of my favorite aspects is the freedom to move between two worlds of science: theory and applications. I believe in what I call “practical theory.” Simply put, it means theory that can be implemented in a practical way for direct use. I enjoy figuring out how the theory in my area of research can be used to enhance current capabilities, and whether application constraints can be folded into the theoretical bounds.

The Lab: Why did you choose to work at Los Alamos rather than somewhere else?

Daniela: Growing up, I believed this was a dream place to work. As a kid, I didn’t really have an idea about the specific work done here; I just knew it was a cool place where I might get to help save the world. The career advice I got in graduate school was straightforward: if you want to do research, go in academia; if you want to do more application, go to industry. Frankly, neither seemed appealing without the other. So I came to Los Alamos because it allowed me to do both.

The Lab: *What does the Lab have to offer you as an engineer that you may not have at another organization?*

Daniela: It is the place where my individual efforts make the biggest contribution to the future of our world. I love working with like-minded people, and the eclectic combination of educational and cultural backgrounds of everyone on my team truly fosters scientific growth. Also, I love to ski. There’s a nearby ski hill where I can enjoy a run or two during winter lunch breaks. No place else offers that!

The Lab: What is your advice to younger women studying to become engineers and who may be interested in a career at the Lab?

Daniela: First, find the specific engineering field you are passionate about and get really good at it. I think while engineering degree courses provide the necessary “tools” and knowledge, it is your passion that will really motivate the most productive use of those “tools.” If you are passionate about doing engineering research, don’t hold back from pursuing an engineering graduate degree. My personal interpretation of the term “career” has been enhanced since coming to the Lab, and I am very excited about the available opportunities for scientific, leadership and personal development. If you are specifically considering a career at the Lab, I strongly encourage you to come out here and participate in our summer student internship program. Get to know our world!

Los Alamos National Laboratory

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